

Time Scheduling

Why time scheduling?

Any student who deliberately undertakes the task of scheduling his time is not one who has decided to spend all of his time studying and doing nothing else. He is usually a person who has decided to use efficiently the time he has to spend studying anyway, and to “desensitize” himself to the many distractions that are constantly occurring.

What does this “desensitizing” involve? It means removing oneself from constant day-to-day, hour-to-hour decisions as to whether one will or will not spend the next hour studying, whether one will or will not go to the library to study, whether one will or will not go to a show on an impulse, and whether or not to use that hour between classes to get next week’s lab assignment out of the way.

A workable schedule can make such decisions for you, thus desensitizing you to momentary distractions. An hour will begin with study on one course and is not disturbed by wondering when you will study for another course, or when you will be able to get out and have some fun. An adequate schedule includes those for you.

How much time scheduling?

Usually a minimum time schedule is best. In other words, plan what you know is necessary, and add it later only if necessary. But, plan your first schedule as one that you can keep, and one that is important to you to keep.

1. What courses are you taking? (List them on a sheet of paper.)
2. How many hours do you estimate you should study for each course each week to do a minimum job?
3. What are the total minimum hours per week for all courses?
4. List your present time schedule for the week, including all fixed times, such as classes, laboratories, club meetings, outside work, travel, eating, and times to go out for recreation (usually leave at least Friday and Saturday evenings open for recreation).
5. Now fill in the remaining hours each week with the number of hours you need to assign to study according to your decision in step 2, either by:
 - Setting up certain hours that you will study certain subjects
 - Setting aside certain hours that you will study, but deciding in advance which courses will be studied in which hour
6. Keep your schedule where you can see it. It should be conspicuous, so put it on top of your desk, or pinned on the wall.
 - Remember keeping to a schedule is not a matter of “will power,” but of the development of a habit of referring to the schedule and following its outline, and this habit development may take weeks of practice.
 - Don’t let extra study that you may find necessary interfere with your recreation hours – take time from unscheduled hours.
 - Exceptions will occur, but afterwards return to the schedule’s pattern.

Make a tentative weekly schedule on a convenient form

1. List all classes and other fixed activities.
2. Add time needed for meals, sleep, job, travel, grooming, etc.
3. Estimate and list time needed for studying each subject, generally 2 to 3 hours per credit hour per week. However, individuals may vary. Some may need more time in certain subjects than others.
4. Find your periods of peak efficiency and periods when you are likely to have the best study conditions. Plan to study your most difficult subjects then.
5. Be very sure to use any free hours between classes.

6. Allow time for preview and review. For example, if you have a free hour between classes, it is wise to spend the beginning of that hour reviewing and revising notes from the preceding lecture. The latter part of the hour may be profitably spent previewing for the next lecture.
7. Schedule each study period as close to that class meeting as possible.
8. To avoid learning interference, schedule the study of unlike subjects consecutively. For example, it is better to follow study of a language with study of a science than to study two languages one right after the other. If you must study two similar subjects on the same night, try taking a break in between.
9. Be sure to plan some time in your schedule for recreation.

Adapt your schedule to changing situations

10. Allow longer periods in your schedule for term papers and projects the weeks you need to work on these.
11. Be sure to plan your final exam review schedule at least three weeks ahead. Plan to spend time on intensive review several nights before the exam and use the night before to go over concepts that are still fuzzy.
12. Allow some unscheduled time in case emergencies arise during regularly scheduled study periods.

Note this additional hint

13. Use odd periods of time for some review or reading. Periods of time spent on a bus or waiting in a dentist's office may be used.

Suggestions on scheduling

14. Use periods when you are tired or when your situation is noisy for jobs that do not require much concentration or original organization. Such jobs are sorting cards and notes or preparing materials for the next day's use may be accomplished at these times.
15. Consider your schedule a firm but flexible guide, not as a hard fast rule.
16. The Counseling and Career Development has a number of materials on scheduling. Check to see if you can find material of most help to you.